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Contents for Week of November 7, 1932. Vol. XI. No. 17.

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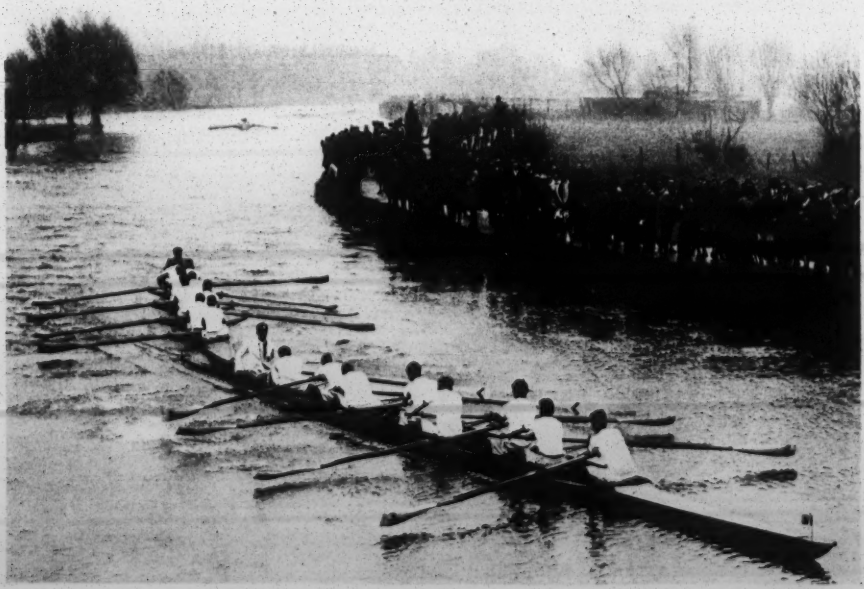

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A BUMPING RACE ON THE "ISIS" AT OXFORD

The object of this kind of rowing is to bump the boat ahead, after one boat has started some distance in front of the other. When Oxford and Cambridge compete on the Thames at London, where the river is wider, the shells row side by side, and the first to cross the finish line is the winner. Poetic license, perhaps, gives Oxford the right to call that part of the Thames flowing by the University the "Isis" (See Bulletin No. 5).

HOW TEACHERS MAY OBTAIN THE BULLETINS

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Eritrea, One of the World's Hot Spots, Receives Italian King

THERE was a hot time in the old town of Massawa, chief seaport of Eritrea, when the King of Italy visited this remote bit of Italian domain in northeastern Africa recently. But the "hot time" was not entirely in His Majesty's honor. Massawa is noted as one of the world's most torrid spots. Its average temperature, January to December, stands at 86 degrees Fahrenheit!

Eritrea spreads like a blunt-topped club along the African shore of the Red Sea for nearly 700 miles. The club handle, the southern portion of the colony, which cuts off Ethiopia (now official name of historic Abyssinia) from the sea, is about 50 miles wide for about 350 miles. Then the western border gradually veers away from the straight northward course. Where it reaches the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan it is about 500 miles from the sea.

120 Degrees in the Shade!

Eritrea is in the same latitude as Honduras. Within the Eritrean borders the traveler finds climates ranging from that of the hottest areas at the Equator to the temperate ones of central Europe. In the lowlands, particularly along the seacoast, the blazing summer sun often drives the mercury to 120 degrees in the shade.

The cooler regions, in the mountains of the hinterland, are resorts from the heat of Egypt, the Red Sea, and even Palestine. Some of the peaks rise to more than 10,000 feet.

The heat of the lowlands, however, is no bar to the activity of trade. Along the coast hundreds of half-naked brown and black natives are employed in salt works, while in the waters in the vicinity of the Dahlak Archipelago, which belongs to the colony, divers search the shark-infested sea for pearls and mother-of-pearl. Some of these Dahlak pearls reach American markets.

Native's Wealth Judged by Size of His Herd

Massawa, about midway along the coast, is a port of call for many steamship lines plying between Europe, North Africa and Asia. Normally the port town seems as lifeless as a lazy settlement of equatorial Africa, but when ships arrive there is a sudden awakening, recalling the excitement attending the arrival of a packet at a Mississippi River port in the showboat era.

The principal railroad in the colony connects Massawa and the colonial capital, Asmara, about 75 miles inland among the Eritrean hills. Leaving the torrid streets of Massawa, the train winds through wide areas of pasture land where nomads tend huge herds of sheep and cattle. Here a native's wealth is judged by the size of his herds. From them come many of the hides that figure in Eritrea's trade.

Farther up in the hills natives have been so successful in producing wheat, cotton, barley, beans, peas, coffee, linseed, flax fibers, dates, and tobacco that extensive Italian immigration has been discouraged. Gold is found in the hills.

Assab Bought As Coaling Station

Massawa now is Eritrea's largest port. But Assab, the only other port of any consequence, has developed rapidly since the completion of a new highway connecting it with the interior. Assab is the cornerstone of Italian colonization on the Red Sea. Slightly more than a half century ago, Assab was purchased by an Italian shipping company for $9,000 for use as a coaling station. By treaties, Italy

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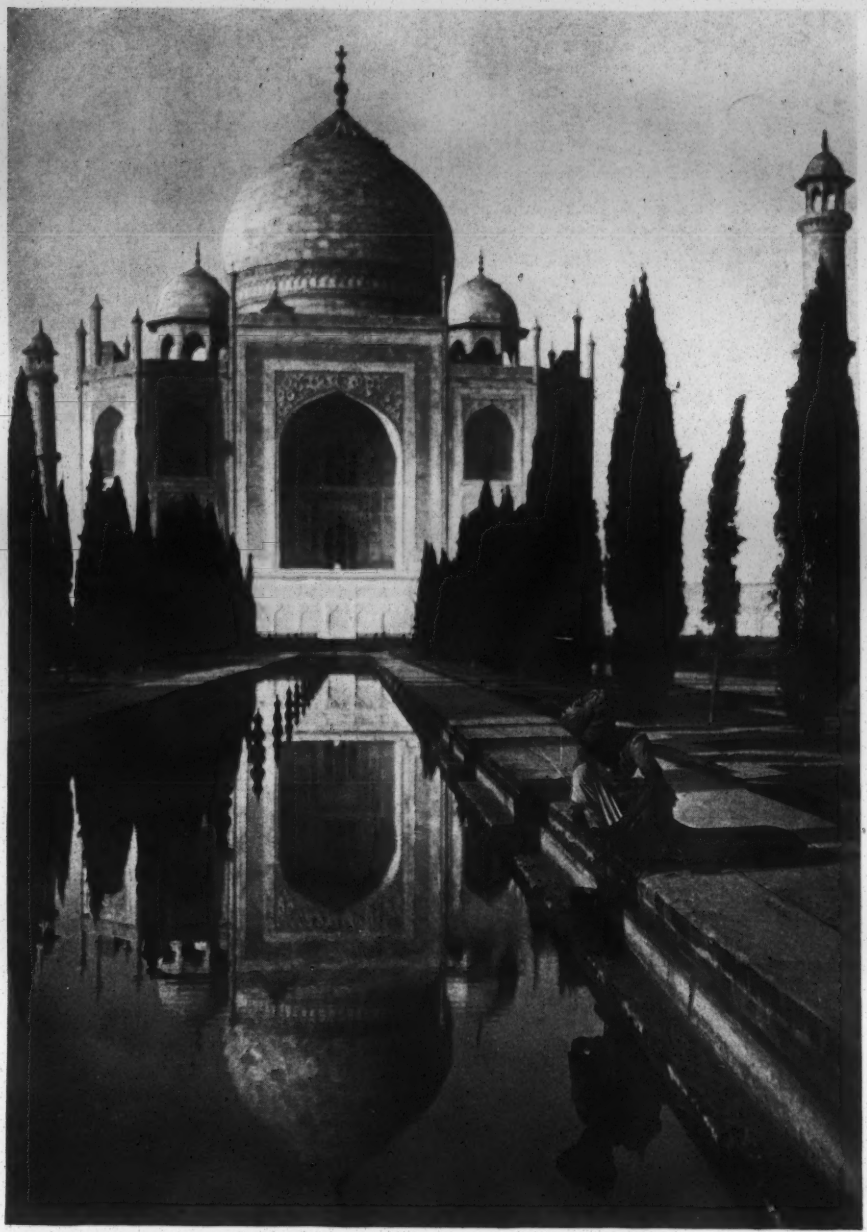

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INDIA, A LAND OF A MILLION BEAUTIFUL TEMPLES, HAS NONE MORE LOVELY THAN THIS, ERECTED TO A WOMAN

The classic Taj Mahal, near Agra, commemorates Mumtaz Mahal, beloved wife of Shah Jahan. While everyone recognizes the Taj by sight, India possesses thousands of other exquisite buildings and temples, many of them practically unknown outside of their own districts. India has given to the world two of its great religions—Brahmanism (Hinduism) and Buddhism, whose followers total more than 380,000,000 of the world's inhabitants (See Bulletin No. 4).

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The Banana, Native of Asia Whose Chief Home Is Central America

WHILE the banana is one of the most popular fruits in the fruit bowls of the United States, it is an alien.

Banana plants demand a hot climate with plenty of rainfall. This is why former Central American jungles have become the world's most prolific banana plantations. Last year more than 55,000,000 stems of bananas were delivered to our ports. Central American republics supplied more than half of this total; Jamaica about one-fourth, and most of the others came from southern Mexico, Cuba and Colombia.

A Stranger in United States until 1870

The banana is believed to have started its journey around the Tropics of the world from India and the Malay Peninsula. Just when it reached the West Indies and Central America is as debatable as the origin of the American Indian.

It was a stranger in the United States until the latter part of the last century. In 1870, a schooner captain, returning to Boston from Jamaica, brought a stem of bananas as a curiosity. Fifteen years later a company was organized to appease the growing American appetite for bananas.

To-day hundreds of ships, armies of men—skilled and unskilled—miles of railroads, thousands of freight and flat cars, mules, horses and oxen, many square miles of modern warehouses and many millions of dollars are employed annually to handle the banana traffic.

The banana has turned vast acres of tropical jungles into food-producing regions, and built modern, sanitary villages with hospitals and schools in former fever-infected regions.

The farmer of the United States who purchases acreage for a farm or plantation clears the land before planting. Not so with the banana plantation owner. He clears away weeds and vines, and plants bits of roots of healthy, producing banana plants among native trees. Each bit of root planted must have an "eye," really a bud, from which a young banana plant sprouts. Later the native trees are felled and many of them are left to protect the young plants from the hot, tropical sun.

Grows on an "Herb" 18 to 40 Feet High!

By the twelfth month, a banana plant begins to produce fruit. The plant, though it grows from 18 to 40 feet high, is an herb, not a tree. Its "trunk" is a compact mass of leaves, the new leaves growing inside the old. A huge blossom thrusts itself out of the top of the "trunk" after several months' growth.

The blossom develops rapidly, becomes topheavy and slowly droops over the side of the "trunk." Shortly the bracts, or blossom-leaves, fall and for the first time bananas are visible—clusters of tiny green fingers that stick straight out from the stem.

Each stem of bananas delivered at the ports of the United States represents a plant. Therefore, it took more than 55,000,000 plants to supply banana consumers of the United States last year. The old plant succumbs to the blade of plantation workmen but, meanwhile, several sprouts are shooting from "eyes" in the old tree roots.

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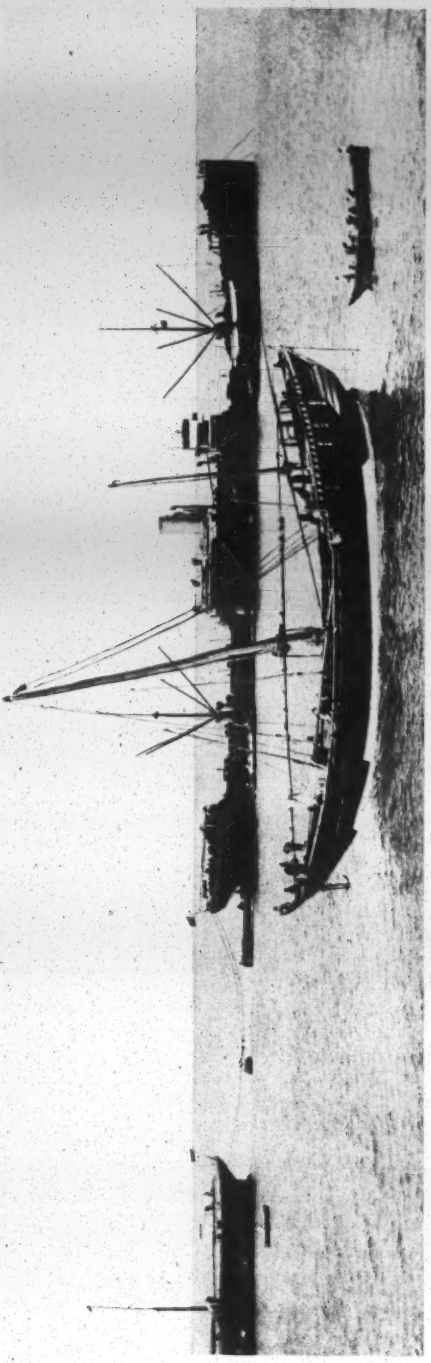

© Photograph by Thomas Bleyler, Jr.

ARAB DHOWS AND TRAMP STEAMERS SHARE THE RED SEA TRADE ALONG ERITREA'S COAST

Up and down the coasts of this long arm of the ocean these high-riding native craft more than hold their own in competition with modern ships. From the Gulf of Aden to the Suez Canal, one sees their single slanting mast and lateen or triangular sails. Some of the ports of Eritrea, Egypt, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and Arabia know no other contact with the outside world.

acquired other parcels of the Red Sea shore country and in 1890 all of them were united under the name Eritrea.

Cotton Chief Crop

Within the borders of the Eritrean "club" there are as many square miles as there are in the State of Pennsylvania, with a population of more than 400,000 brown and black inhabitants and a sprinkling of Europeans. Cotton raising is the principal industry.

Until the collapse of world cotton prices a short time ago Eritrea was self-supporting. While the dull shuffle of camel's hoofs is still heard in the streets of some of the towns, the click of the telegraph key and the sound of automobile horns are now within earshot at the same moment. Eritrean telegraph lines to-day would reach from Washington to New York City and back.

Several Languages

Several languages are spoken in Eritrea. Two of them are derived from the ancient Ghehz. Ethiopian tongues, in the highlands, and Arabic, in the coast ports, are also understood. Modern Italian schools are attempting to overcome this confusion of languages by teaching the younger generation Italian.

The chief native religions are Christian (Coptic rite) and Mohammedan, but there are also some Roman Catholics and a few pagans.

Note: See also "Sailing Forbidden Coasts," *National Geographic Magazine*, September, 1931. For data about Eritrea's neighbor Ethiopia see: "Modern Ethiopia," June, 1931; and "Nature and Man in Ethiopia," August, 1928.

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Moscow's "Red Square" Has Many Colors and It Isn't a Square

THIS week the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics will celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Revolution. Every city, town and village in the land will observe this Russian "Fourth of July" but the chief demonstration, as in previous years, will take place in Moscow's Red Square.

As Soviet Russia changes within and without, Red Square, the pulsing heart of the capital city, is changing. Level granite paving recently replaced the ancient cobbles; the Shrine of the Iberian Virgin has been removed to widen a boulevard leading into the Square; and Lenin's new reddish marble tomb now stands where a temporary wooden vault hugged the shadow of the Kremlin wall.

A Stage for Russia's Grandeur and Tragedy

"Why call it Red Square when it is oblong, and its colors are gray, brown, yellow, and white?" the visitor to Moscow usually asks. But the Russians do not refer to it as Red Square. They say "Krasnaya Ploshchad" which, freely translated, means "Place of Reddish (Imperial) Beauty."

Much of the drama of Russia's grandeur and tragedy has unfolded in the great open space in Moscow that has come to be known as Red Square. Formerly it was the scene of public executions, hangings, and floggings when the Tsars ruled from Moscow, and of imperial proclamations and glittering martial parades. Its cobbles ran red with blood when Peter slaughtered the Streltsi.

Later in 1917 it saw revolution. The Kremlin walls echoed with the shots of Red and White soldiery. To-day its vast expanse has become the parade ground of the military forces of the New Russia of the Soviets. Twice a year, on the first of May and the seventh of November, (October 25th on old Russian calendars) a million armed soldiers and banner-bearing workers march through Red Square shouting and singing. Cossacks race their horses, whips lashing, and squadrons of planes roar overhead in square formation.

Along one side of the Square extends the sixty-five-foot wall of the Kremlin, pierced by the Redeemer Gate, over which rises a great clock tower, 205 feet high. This beautiful shaft was built a year before Columbus discovered America. Across from the Kremlin wall stands a large structure used jointly as a Department Store and as a government office building.

Bishop's Palace a Museum

At the north end of the rectangular space broods the twin-towered building that was once a Bishop's palace. This pseudo-gothic structure is now a historical museum, where many relics of Russia's imperial past are on display.

Opposite it, on the south side of Red Square, stands the fantastic St. Basil's Cathedral, a glittering, bewildering mass of bulbous towers and domes, as queer as the cardboard castles of a Broadway musical comedy. It typifies the Russia that used to be. Legend says that Ivan the Terrible blinded the architect who made it, to be certain he would not build a duplicate elsewhere.

Into Red Square, from the adjoining Place of the Revolution, a constant human stream pours during daylight hours. There are women in felt boots; clerks in leather jackets; officials, reasonably well dressed, with brief-cases under their arms; laborers in dirty sheepskin coats, slippered girls trudging through the dust of the streets, carrying babies and bundles, or dragging hand carts behind them.

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At every stage of their journey to the fruit bowl, bananas are carefully handled to avoid bruising. Temperatures to which they are subjected also are as carefully watched as the temperature of an infant's milk. Too slow or too rapid ripening may mean the loss of whole cargoes of fruit.

When the plantation manager is advised, perhaps by radio, that a fruit ship is due to arrive at his port and a certain number of stems are expected from his plantation, he dispatches workmen to bring in the required quantity. It takes an expert to select the stems of proper grade for shipment.

To clip a stem of bananas from its lofty perch might mean destruction of the bananas and much loss of time, so the cutters, equipped with long poles topped with sharp knives, partially cut the plant just below the fruit so that the plant top and stem droop toward the ground. Then a "backer" or banana carrier steps under the stem; it is clipped by another workman, and carried to a mule, horse, ox, tram, or whatever transport is available, to begin the long haul to the ship's hold.

Note: See also "Costa Rica, the Land of the Banana," *National Geographic Magazine*, February, 1922; "Buenos Aires to Washington by Horse," February, 1929; "Flying the World's Longest Air-Mail Route," March, 1930; "To Bogotá and Back by Air," May, 1928; "How Latin America Looks from the Air," October, 1927; "Jamaica, the Isle of Many Rivers," January, 1927; and "How the World Is Fed," January, 1916.

Bulletin No. 2, November 7, 1932.

© *Photograph from H. J. Harvey*

SPEEDING THE BANANA FROM SHIPS TO RAILROAD CARS

At the modern docks of New Orleans endless belt conveyors can unload 50,000 bunches of bananas in eight hours. The fruit is unloaded from every hatch and every deck at the same time, and within 24 hours of the time that a banana ship is made fast alongside its wharf the entire cargo may be speeding northward to help satisfy America's appetite for this popular tropical fruit.

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Buddha's Cave Reported Found in Bengal, India's Tiger-land

THE cave where Gautama Buddha, founder of Buddhism, lived and preached his doctrine of sorrow has at last been found, according to dispatches from India, in the Rajgir Hills, province of Bengal. The discovery by an exploring party of the Indian Civil Service ends a 1300-year search for the "hermitage" of the prophet of 150,000,000 of the earth's inhabitants to-day.

Bengal will ever remain the land of the tiger to the small boy, but it is more properly the land of jute and tea to those who think in economic terms. This large province, between India-proper and Burma, straddles the northernmost point of the Bay of Bengal, and stretches northward to the peaks of the Himalayas. Thus it has two totally different sections, the low and often marshy plains of the south, and the rough hills and mountains of the north. It is separated from Tibet only by the native Indian States of Sikkim and Bhutan.

A Land of More Than 80 Tongues

Bengal is slightly larger than Kansas, with as many inhabitants as are to be found in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Texas and Michigan combined—two-fifths as many as in the entire United States. More than eighty different languages are spoken among the human horde, not to mention the various dialects. To say that language in India changes every ten miles, perhaps, is not far wrong.

Bengal's gateway is its most homely feature. Those familiar with the murky rivers of the province know when the coast is near, even before land is sighted, for the beautiful indigo blue water of the Bay of Bengal begins to take on a brownish hue, due to the silt that is brought down from the north by the Ganges and a labyrinth of rivers and creeks that pierces the coastline. Between the banks of the numerous channels are swampy peninsulas covered with malaria-infested jungle land in which roam the famous Bengal tigers, a few remaining elephants, and other wild animals. These wilds, and the water-logged lowlands just north of them, are called the Sundarbans.

Calcutta, capital of Bengal and the largest city of India, lies about 80 miles up the Hooghly. Since it is the only large port at the head of the Bay of Bengal and is easily reached from the interior by numerous canals, rivers, and railroads, Assam and neighboring provinces also use it as their port. Therefore, the treacherous Hooghly is filled with shipping. The passenger bound for Calcutta is not sorry, for the odd little native junks and large ocean-going vessels absorb his attention from the ugly marshes and thickets on shore.

Jute Mills Make Sacks for American Potatoes

The first evidence of human existence, as Calcutta is neared, is the appearance of a few houses and then the tall smokestacks of jute mills that loom up above the low brick buildings, where jute sacking is made in enormous quantities, and shipped to all parts of the world. Much of it is used in the United States, particularly in handling our farm products. Little does the cotton picker of the South realize that the more cotton he picks, the more mouths he helps to feed in Bengal, for the cotton bale wrappers are usually made of jute. Likewise the farmer cultivating his potato fields, does not realize, perhaps, that the size of his crop helps to determine how many Indian natives are to be employed, and that the least failure

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Until a short time ago the east side of the Square had its Trading Row, where almost any day stood a long queue of women waiting for the opportunity to buy cloth or overshoes or other merchandise of which there was a limited supply. Many of the women carried babies because such a burden gave them a preferred place in line. Babies were occasionally borrowed or rented by would-be purchasers who had no small children of their own.

Venders cluster around the gates leading to and from Red Square, selling all manner of articles—long Russian cigarettes with a short section of tobacco and a lengthy mouthpiece of hollow cardboard; indifferent apples and oranges; dried sunflower seeds; candies exposed to the dust; and cheeses cut to order.

Note: For supplementary reading see: "Some Impressions of 150,000 Miles of Travel," *National Geographic Magazine*, May, 1930; and "Russia of the Hour," November, 1926. See also: "Surveying through Khoresm," June, 1932; "The Far Eastern Republic," June, 1922; "Glimpses of Siberia," December, 1920; and "The Land of the Lambskins," July, 1919. For aerial photographs of remote sections of the Soviet Union see "The First Airship Flight around the World," (Graf Zeppelin), June, 1930.

Bulletin No. 3, November 7, 1932.

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THE HEART OF MOSCOW (MOSKVA), CAPITAL OF THE SOVIET UNION

Looking toward the Kremlin and Red Square from the banks of the placid Moskva River. Around the Kremlin, Moscow's city-fortress within a city, much of the history of Russia's past has revolved. To-day it is the "Capitol" of the Soviet Union, a vast domain stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the Pacific, and from the Black Sea to the Arctic.

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The Thames, a Pageant of English Life and History

DISCOVERY near Hampton Court of fossil remains of a Bronze Age man, who lived in the Thames Valley some 2,500 years ago, calls attention to the long and important rôle the Thames River has played in the pageant of English life and history.

"The Thames, England's longest river, shows within the small compass of a hundred miles just what is best in English scenery, history and modern life," says R. J. Evans, who paddled a Canadian canoe from near its source at Cricklade down to London and reported his journey to the National Geographic Society.

First Eleven Miles Hardly Navigable

"At Cricklade the river is little more than a rivulet," writes Mr. Evans, "in fact, the local people all referred to it as 'the Brook' and that the name was well deserved we found from personal experience.

"The first eleven miles to Lechlade are not really navigable water, and for most of the distance we had to walk in the bed of the stream, guiding the canoe over the shallows, which occurred every few yards, while if there were sufficient depth of water our progress was impeded by the heavy weeds.

"Lechlade is a Cotswold town, built around a wide and sunny market-place, from one side of which rises the sixteenth-century church, with its spire so loved by the poet Shelley. The houses are of stone, brick being a rarity in the Cotswolds, and have an air of mingled spaciousness and dignity which is most attractive.

"Four miles below is the ferry where Matthew Arnold saw the Scholar-Gipsy 'crossing the stripling Thames at Bablockhythe,' and about a mile on the right the village of Cummor, where was enacted the tragedy of Amy Robsart, described by Sir Walter Scott in 'Kenilworth.'

River Curves Near Oxford

"At one point we could see the spires of Oxford, but, as the river describes a great horseshoe curve, it was some time before we approached the outskirts of the famous University city.

"From Oxford the river runs to Iffley, a little village two miles below, with England's finest example of a small Norman church. This stretch is the scene of the College bumping races—the Torpids in the Lent term and the Eights in the spring term. Both are eight-oared races, extending over a week, the boats starting in a line-ahead formation, 150 feet apart. In both sets of races the principle is that each boat endeavors to overtake and touch the one in front, and if successful takes its place on the succeeding day (see cover illustration).

"Below Abingdon are the twin villages of Goring and Streatley. They occupy what was the most beautiful spot on the Thames, but now, alas, are crowded with the houses of the newly rich; and what was a paradise is now an inferno of money and motor cars. The country round, however, is still unspoilt and the reaches down to Pangbourne full of beauty.

"A busy town, Reading is famous the world over for its biscuits and its garden seeds. We paddled away past Sonning to Shiplake, where we camped on the long island by the lock, getting up early the next morning and reaching Henley in good time. Henley is a quiet little place for fifty-one weeks in the year; but for one crowded week in July it is the scene of the chief river regatta in the world, and here once again we have a typical picture of English life.

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of the crop affects the jute mill workers. Potatoes are, in large part, handled in jute sacks. More than a hundred and twenty-five million dollars worth of jute products are exported from Calcutta annually.

New York has its Fifth Avenue dress parades and so does Maidan, Calcutta's parade ground, with the Indian contingent far more rich and colorful. The Maidan parade sometimes includes the Viceroy when he happens to be in Calcutta. Then there are other high government officials, rich rajahs of the several scores of native Indian states in their gorgeous robes and jewels, and Anglo-Indians, as the offspring of British fathers and Indian mothers prefer to be called.

Calcutta owes its beautiful government buildings to the period when it was the capital city of India prior to 1912, when the seat of government was removed to Delhi. The governor's mansion is the former palace of the Viceroy.

Nearly all Bengal is a flat fertile plain from the Sundarbans to the foothills of the Himalayas. This foothill country is reached after a day and night of rough train riding from Calcutta. A narrow gauge railroad is then taken to reach Bengal's roof, Darjeeling, perched seven thousand feet up among Himalayan peaks. On the way up the snakelike course of the railroad, one can see thousands of acres of tea plants that from a distance resemble fields of boxwood hedge such as that which lines our city lawns. Some of the plants grow as high as six feet in Bengal, and are stripped of their leaves as many as five times a year.

Note: Students preparing geography papers about India will find additional photographs and references in "Flying the World," *National Geographic Magazine*, June, 1932; "The Citroën-Haardt Trans-Asiatic Expedition Reaches Kashmir, October, 1931; "Working Teak in the Burma Forests," August, 1930; "House-Boat Days in the Vale of Kashmir," October, 1929; "Pathfinder of the East," November, 1927; "Streets and Palaces of Colorful India," July, 1926; "From England to India by Automobile," August, 1925; "Tiger Hunting in India," November, 1924; "Hunting the Chaulmoogra Tree," March, 1922; and "Through the Heart of Hindustan," November, 1921.

Bulletin No. 4, November 7, 1932.

© *Photograph by William W. Chapin*

PLAYING PACHISI ON A RIVER STEAMER IN BENGAL

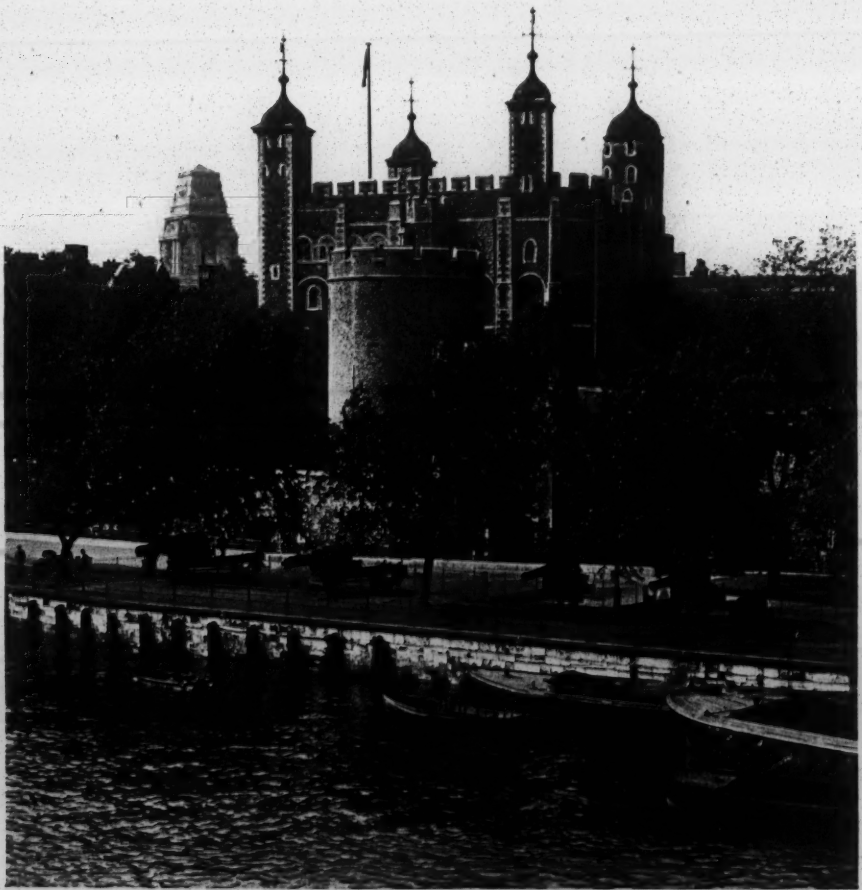
In place of counters and dice this game, somewhat like backgammon, is played in the land of its origin with colored cones and cowrie shells. Indians like to travel. To the railway and the river steamer is due much of the modern breakdown of caste rules—and also of a little oriental courtesy. "Every man for himself," applies in Calcutta and Bombay, just as it does in New York's subway, or in the Chicago "loop."

"Windsor was a fitting goal. The castle is, perhaps, the most regal building in the world. Founded by William the Conqueror, it has always been a favorite royal residence. Nestling under its shadow is a little town, and a few fields away Eton College, one of the most famous schools in England.

"The last few miles of the river through London to the North Sea is busier, but not so scenically picturesque."

Note: See also: "Some Forgotten Corners of London," *National Geographic Magazine*, February, 1932; "Visits to the Old Inns of England," March, 1931; "Oxford, Mother of Anglo-Saxon Learning," November, 1929; "Vacation in a Fifteenth Century English Manor House," May, 1928; "London from a Bus Top," May, 1926; "Black Headed Gulls in London," June, 1925; "Through the Heart of England in a Canadian Canoe," May, 1922; and "Channel Ports—and Some Others," July, 1915.

Bulletin No. 5, November 7, 1932.



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THE TOWER OF LONDON STILL FROWNS ON FATHER THAMES

The White Tower, or central portion, built in 1078, has lived through almost as much of England's history as the venerable river at its foot. This time-honored building has served as fortress, palace and prison. To-day it is a museum containing many priceless historical relics. Peeping over the trees at the left is the imposing "Port of London Authority Building," one of the modern London skyscrapers. Above London the Thames is used mainly for recreation; below London it is one of the busiest commercial rivers in the world.